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THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD HAGGADA (AGADA).

THERE are few words of which the etymology is so clear, and the original signification nevertheless so enshrouded in obscurity, as the word **הַגָּדָה** (or in its Aramaised form **אגדה**). In spite of the undoubted fact that this word is formed in the usual way as a *nomen actionis* from the verbal derivative **הִגִּיד** (of the root **הגד**), and that in its widest sense it signifies in Rabbinic literature all that does not belong to the sphere of Halacha—yet the manner in which the actual meaning of this word has been determined upon the basis of this etymology is by no means satisfactory. In the various attempts that have been made to deduce the exact connotation of the word Haggada (or Agada) from the undisputed meaning of the verb **הִגִּיד**, we may notice a peculiar and unmistakeable hesitation and perplexity, which cannot be explained away by the mere circumstance that the idea of Haggada, varying as the application of the word does so frequently, is itself of an uncertain and indefinite character. When we take a glance at the etymological definitions of “Haggada” given by the best authorities, we especially observe that most of them refer it to the sense “to narrate,” which, although only to a very limited extent, is the translation of the verb **הִגִּיד** in Biblical Hebrew. Sometimes in the definitions of the word, the meaning “to tell,” or “to discourse” is referred to. A brief survey of these various definitions, which, however, is far from being complete, will prove to demonstration the great uncertainty that exists upon this apparently simple question.

From among the earlier works, there need only be mentioned the *Lexicon Chaldaicum, Talmudicum et Rabbinicum* (Basle, 1639), of J. Buxtorf, which explains the

word הגדה in the following manner, (s.v. נגד; Col. 1295): "Narratio, enarratio, historia jucunda et subtilis, discursus historicus aut theologicus de aliquo loco Scripturæ jucundus, animum lectoris attrahens. Et ita est ab Hebraeo הגיד narravit, nunciavit, *ein kurzweilige Rede* (a diverting discourse.)" To this verbose definition, a strong contrast is formed by the laconic explanation of Zunz in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* (p. 42), which was the first work in which the Agada was scientifically treated. Zunz divides the Midrash into "Halacha (*Regel*) and Haggada (*Gesagtes*)," and in the chapter upon the latter subject (p. 58) he gives expression to the only opinion offered by him upon the derivation of this word, in the form of the following antithesis: "The Halacha must have been really *heard* by the person who publishes it; whilst with regard to the Haggada, it suffices for the purpose of it receiving the name of Haggada, that it shall have been merely *spoken* somewhere."¹ This definition was adopted by Steinschneider without discussion in his history of Jewish literature (contained in *Ersch und Gruber's Encyclopädie*, 1850; also translated into English with the title *Jewish Literature*, 1857). An anonymous writer in the Hebrew journal *Zion* (edited by Creizenach and Jost), Vol. II., p. 109, has further employed this definition in a contemptuous sense; and obviously basing his remark on Zunz, observes, ושם אגדה מורה על כזבה ובדיה, שהיא אגדה דברים בלבד יוצאים מקרב איש ממושגי אדם ברעיוני המליצים ולא חלק להם בבניה. In the prefatory paragraphs of his work "The Spirit of the Earliest Commentaries to the Bible or *Haggadic Exegesis*" (1847), H. S. Hirschfeld defines the "Haggadah" as "the theoretic view, that which is spoken and believed"; and further as "a truth that has hitherto only been given utterance to, and has not yet been carried into realisation, or desires no actual practical application." The same author had

¹ Cp. also *Gott. Vort.*, pp. 333 sq.

previously offered the following explanation of הגדה [in his *Halachic Exegesis*, (1840), p. 13, note 1]: “dicta, sermones, from נגד to speak, to narrate, to mean—an opinion.” S. L. Rapoport, in his *Erech Millin*, 1852, p. 6 (s.v. אגדה), does not enter into the question of the etymology of the word, but at the head of the article he places four German expressions as its equivalents, from which his opinion upon the subject may be ascertained. The words are “Sagen, Erzählungen, Legenden, öffentliche Vorträge” (sayings, tales, legends, public discourses). This fourfold definition is criticised by Z. Frankel (*Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*; second year of issue, 1853, p. 388), who especially misses “an essential part of the real explanation, viz.: the religious and moral interpretation of Holy Writ, and its application to actual life.” He then continues, “In the course of time, the Hagada extended its sphere; originally it undoubtedly corresponded to its etymological idea of a “Saying, a tale,” and in this indefinite sense was employed as the simple expression of a series of thoughts based on religion and morality, etc.” Graetz appears to take the word in the sense of “Discourse.” He defines the Agada as “a peculiar, skilful kind of discourse, rich in descriptions, full of fine passages and enigmatic observations” (*Geschichte der Juden*, vol. iii. ; 1st edition, p. 231). J. Levy distinguishes the word אגדה (from the root אגד) from הגדה, an opinion already mentioned by Buxtorf, and commences his article upon אגדה as follows (*Neuhebr. Wörterbuch*, I. 19a):—“Agada, properly narration, a tale, a fable, etc.” In his article on הגדה (I. 450a) he describes it as “a narrative, a tale, Biblical exegesis.” Similarly Kohut (*Aruch*, III., 178a), “a narrative, tale, Biblical exposition.” Hamburger (*Real-Encyclopädie*, Part II., p. 19) gives the following definition; “the meaning of the word, according to its root נגד, signifying to say, to relate, to declare, to explain, to specify, to communicate, to inform, to report, is a narrative, a tale, instruction, a communication, an explanation, a

discourse, the word being a collective term for the various branches of Talmudic knowledge which are not concerned with the regulation of religious practice, which is the province of Halacha." According to Güdemann (*Jubelschrift* upon the ninetieth birthday of Dr. L. Zunz, p. 116) הגדה signifies "tradition" (unwritten, oral), in contrast to כתב "the written word." And for the purpose of citing a Christian scholar, we may mention that Schürer translates Haggada by "legend" (*Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes zur Zeit J. Chr.*, I. 86) and אגדות according to him are "legends" (*ib.* II., p. 278).

When we look at this list of definitions, that could very easily be increased, we cannot fail to observe the uncertainty of the methods employed, and the contradiction between the pretended primary signification of the word הגדה and its actual application. We cannot avoid the impression that, as Frankel in the quoted passage puts it, the conception of "Hagada" in reality can be "more felt than explained." No unbiassed critic will be satisfied with any of the above-quoted definitions. The explanation of Zunz appears to be comparatively the most correct, since it approaches nearest to the common meaning of the verb הגיד, to relate, to communicate something to some one verbally. This definition can boast of no less an authority than that of Moses Nachmani, who, in his account of the disputations in which he was engaged in the year 1263 (ס' ויכוח הרמ"ב, edited by Steinschneider, p. 10), renders הגדה by "razionamiento," and adds the following comment: רוצה לומר שאינן אלא דברים שאדם מגיד לחברו. But it is quite clear how insufficient a word derived from the meaning "communication, a tale, or that which has been told," must be to express what is meant by Agada, however much may be imported into this colourless notion; for this signification is so wide that none of those points that are the real characteristics of the Agada are to be recognised in it. The derivation of the word הגדה from the sense of "announcing," found, *e.g.*, in the work of L. Löw

(*Praktische Einleitung in die heilige Schrift*, 1855, p. 62), according to which it would mean "public discourse, a sermon," has some support from the fact that the addresses of the prophets, especially those that deal with admonitions and rebukes, are introduced by the verb *הגיד* (cp. Micah iii. 8; Isaiah lviii. 1; Ezek. xxiii. 36). But this use of the verb even in the Bible is very limited, and is nowhere imitated in later Hebrew; besides which we usually find the verb *דרש*, employed to signify "a discourse, a sermon," and the Halacha, as well as the Agada, formed the topics of public discourses. The explanation of the word *הגדה*, that corresponds least to the meaning of the verb *הגיד*, and to the contents of Agadic passages, is that which takes it as being equal to "a narration," which is the translation of Buxtorf, who renders "an amusing discourse," and of Rapoport, whose idea has since been generally adopted, and who renders "a tale, a legend, a poetic fiction." For whilst it is true that *הגיד* also means "to narrate," it is only so used in the sense of intimating or communicating some special event or some facts which have hitherto remained unknown to the hearer (cp. Aramaic *הגיד*). A "narration" in its general sense, that indicates a connected enumeration of a series of real or imagined occurrences, is expressed by the word *ספר*, corresponding to the Aramaic *אשרתי*. For even if it be admitted that *הגיד* may signify "to narrate" in its general sense, and it really is occasionally interchanged for *ספר* (cp. Gen. xxxvii. 5 and 9; Ps. xxii. 32 and lxxi. 15; and the parallelisms in Ps. xix. 2, xl. 6), while a transference of meaning is no uncommon thing, yet this fact is no justification for accepting the statement that just from this verb have been formed the conceptions that the above-cited opinions have ascribed to the word *הגדה*; nor do we find in post-Biblical Hebrew, to which the word belongs, either the verb or its derivative in the sense of "narrating." But the most cogent objection to this view is, that it is quite impossible by accepting the primary

meaning of the word to derive from it that signification which must especially be regarded in the definition of the term Agada, viz., the exposition and application of the Scriptures; there is no means whatsoever of connecting the supposed original signification of "narration, tale," etc., with the main contents of all Agada, the interpretation of the Scripture. And, further, why should the term Agada, which always consisted of interpretations of Scripture, and in which the narrative element, an extension of the original Biblical narrative, was also based upon exegetical rules, be borrowed just from this incidental element to the utter neglect of the precise contents of the Agada. In reality it is an inversion of the real state of the case, if, according to the view adopted especially by Gûdemann, we derive the origin of the Agada from folk-tales, to which, according to Gûdemann, first through Akiba, was superadded the Midrash, that is Biblical exposition, in order to connect in an exegetical sense the peculiar contents of the popular tales about the narratives of the Bible and their heroes with the Biblical text. It would lead me too far afield were I to undertake here to refute in detail this theory and the certainly ingenious and closely-reasoned argument of Gûdemann upon this question. The fundamental error upon which his explanation is based will be at once apparent as soon as I have demonstrated—I trust with convincing force—that הגדה indeed does not signify "a tale, myth, legend." There is, however, one "documentary proof" adduced by Gûdemann in support of his assertion that Haggada means folk-tale ("that which is told") as opposed to the Biblical text, which I cannot pass over in silence. He refers to the passages in the *Sifre* (to Num. v. 19 § 12), in Jerus. Talmud (*Sota* i. 4, 16*d*), and in the Babyl. Talmud (*Sota* 7*b*), where injunctions are given as to what the priest is to read to the wife suspected of unfaithfulness in order to admonish her. These instructions run as follows in the *Sifre*:—אומר לפניו דברי הגדה מעשים: שאירעו בכתובים הראשונים כגון אשר חכמים יגידו ולא כחדו

מאבות. The passage is the same in the Babyl. Talmud, except that instead of דברי הגדה מעשים, we read דברים של הגדה ומעשים; moreover, the verse from Job (xv. 18), according to its Agadic application, is said to refer to the repentant confessions of the two sons of Jacob, Reuben and Judah. In the Jerus. Talmud we read, with reference to the corresponding words in the Mishna, כגון מעשה ראובן בבלחה, ומעשה יהודה בתמר אשר חכמים יגידו אלו ראובן ויהודה. The verse from Job is quoted in all three passages, and is also elsewhere (*Sifre* to Deut. xxxiii. 6, the beginning of § 348)¹ applied to the penitent confessions of the two sons of Jacob. In the *Sifre* to Numb. § 12 this application of the verse in Job must also have originally been in the text, and it is out of the question to assert, with Güdemann, that the words in the Babyl. Talmud כגון אשר חכמים יגידו, are to be considered as a later addition, seeing that they form an essential portion of the whole phrase, and are to be found in all the three sources. It is certainly possible to derive דברי הגדה (or ד' של הגדה) from הגיד, to tell, to confess, and to bring it into connection with the יגידו of the verse in Job, as was hitherto commonly done, following the example of Rashi; or the phrase may be understood as denoting "Words of the Haggada" (Agada), as is urged, *e.g.*, by Wünsche (*Der babylonische Talmud*, ii., 249), and certainly the following sentence (.....מעשים שאירעו) is to be joined to this former phrase as an amplification of it, and indicates whence these דברי הגדה are to be taken, *i.e.*, from the "narratives of the earlier writings,"² which contain examples of repentant confessions. The verse of Job is then brought with its

¹ Also in the Targum to Job xv. 18, though in a תרגום אחר, that, however, is to be regarded as the original text of the Targum (v. *R. d. E. J.* xxi., p. 122), the words חכמים יגידו are rendered by חכימא דיעקב חכימא דיעקב, which is an undoubted allusion to the sons of Jacob (called in the Agada 'שבטאים').

² The words בכתיבים הראשונים may be taken to indicate the book of Job, which is first in the traditional order of the כתובים (Hagiographa); cp. נביאים ראשונים.

Agadic application as an illustration (בנוי). The Jerus. Talmud gives only the example without the introductory words. How strained, compared with this explanation of our Boraitha, is that of Güdemann, which, as I have shown, uncritically sets down a whole passage as a later interpolation, and, nevertheless, still retains the ו before מעשים as authentic,¹ solely in order to be able to prove the contrast between the כתובים, the written (Biblical) sources from which the priest delivered his admonitory address, and the הגדה the oral source, i.e. the "tale, folk-story." But, according to this explanation, why are not examples adduced also for that portion of the admonitory speech that was intended to move the suspected wife to confess her guilt? Such examples would certainly have had a special interest for us; the lack of them, without any further arguments, is sufficient to demonstrate the view of Güdemann as untenable in every way.

Some time ago I thought that a plausible explanation of the word Haggada was to be found in a special signification of the word, hitherto unmentioned. הגדה denotes also, as is well known, an important portion of the ritual for the Eve of Passover, containing, by means of Agadic explanation of several Biblical verses, a glorified account of the Exodus from Egypt. The reason for this designation is not far to seek. One of the commandments by which the narrative of the Exodus was imposed as a duty upon future generations begins with the words: והגדת לבנך (Exod. xiii. 8). The ritual for Passover-eve that carried this ordinance into effect was therefore called הגדה.² This title, which con-

¹ In the *Lekach Tob* of R. Tobias b. Eliczer to Num. v. 19, the passage in the *Sifrê* is inserted, and just without the ו of which we have spoken; besides, instead of שאירעו מעשים, he reads שאירע מעשים.

² Perhaps the word הגדה, in Deut. xxvi. 3, also had some influence upon the fixing of this designation, seeing that the interpretation of the verses (Deut. xxvi. 5-8) form the most important portion of the Passover Haggada, according to *Mishna Pesachim*, x. 4. Exod. xiii. 8 is also quoted by Gamliel in *M. Pesachim*, x. 15, but only in reference to

הגדה is derived from the commandment ודגרת, it is possible that this designation must be attributed to the more general signification of the word; the Agadic passages (and they are real Agada in the least disputed use of the word) that are recited on the Eve of Passover in honour of the deliverance from Egypt, were called exactly by their true name, and spoken of as the Haggada of the evening of the festival.¹

After this digression, we will now return to the subject of our inquiry. What is the primary meaning, and what the origin, of the expression Haggada (Agada)? That which is especially noteworthy in the above-quoted explanations, and that which has been the cause of their peculiarly hesitating and uncertain character, is the fact that none of them has a philological basis. In that stage of the development of the Hebrew language at which the word הגדה originated, we do not find attached to the verb הגיד, to which it belongs, any of those significations that are conjecturally ascribed to the noun. For "to say, to communicate," אמר is used in New-Hebrew, or נא; for "to relate," כוה or ספר; for "to discourse," דרש; but to my knowledge the verb הגיד never occurs in any of these senses.² Still, this verb is by no means rare in the New-Hebrew of the time to which we must ascribe the origin of the word

¹ Perhaps this portion of the liturgy of Passover Eve was expressly called הגדה, because learned men discussed also the Halacha of the festival. Thus says Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (*Mechilta* to Exod. xiii. 14, ed. Friedmann, 23a):—מנין אתה אומר שאם היתה חבורה של חכמים או של..... תלמידים שצריכים לעסוק בהלכות פסח עד הצות..... With this compare the incident narrated in the Tosefta to *Pesachim* 10, 13, about Gamliel II. and the learned men, שהיו.....עסוקין בחלכות פסח כל אותו הלילה. In the corresponding piece of our *Pesach Haggada* (.....אליעזר בר, (מעשה בר, the learned men (Gamliel II. is missing from this list) are also engaged in eager discussion the whole night, but the subject of their conversation is not Halacha, but Agada—היו מספרים ביציאת מצרים—(note the use of מספרים, not מנירים, a point that supports the above-mentioned remarks upon the difference between the two verbs).

² Neither Levy nor Kohut discuss the verb; both only speak of the Aramaic verb נגד.

now under treatment. We there meet with it in quite a special sense, as a scholastic technical expression of the Palestinian exegetes, and just this signification which has strangely hitherto been altogether neglected by the numerous commentators upon the word Haggada is the one most especially fit for its thorough explanation.¹ We find it in a place where above all others it is our right and obligation to seek for the extensive word-family to which our expression belongs, viz., in the memorials of the oldest Palestinian exegesis, which have fortunately been preserved in the works of the Midrash of the Tannaim. These works, the final redaction of which took place at the beginning of the time of the Amoraim (first half of the third century), contain, as is well known, numerous ingredients that reach back to the earliest age of the Tannaim; these oldest elements of the Tannaite exegesis are to be found in the Midrashim emanating from the school of R. Ishmael. In the Midrash of the school of Ishmael our verb does not occur in isolated places, but is constantly employed as a technical term, and in one definite sense. I allude to the term מְגִיד, which very frequently introduces the meaning exegetically derived from the text of the Bible, and by which the interpretation or deduction from the text is linked on to it. Thus in the very introduction to the *Mechilta*² (to xii. 1, 1a), we read as follows: — אל משה ואל אהרן שומע אני כל הקודם במקרא הוא קודם במעשה כשהוא אומר הוא אהרן ומשה מגיד ששניהם זה קודם זה, i.e., because in one passage Aaron is mentioned before Moses, and in another the order is reversed, Scripture indicates that both were equal in rank. Then

¹ As far as I know the only person who has hitherto connected the word הַגָּדָה with the technical term of Tannaitic exegesis which is now to be discussed is Simon Ungar, pupil of the Seminary in Budapest, at present Rabbi of Szegzárd (Hungary), in his Hungarian dissertation upon the exegesis of the *Bereshith Rabba* (Budapest, 1890). Certainly he does not pursue the idea with sufficient precision, but nevertheless to him belongs the merit of having been the first to discover the right track to the explanation of our word.

² The edition of the *Mechilta* here quoted is that of Friedmann.

follow three similarly-couched instances to show that by inverting the ordinary order the text means to indicate the equality in rank. Here we may notice quite distinctly the manner in which מגיד introduces the teaching which is deduced from the Holy Writ, lessons that are not directly evident from the text, but which are to be drawn from what the text says (אומר). The subject to the word מגיד is to be understood, viz., the text, Holy Writ; as it is distinctly stated in many examples (cp. to xii. 41, 16a). מגיד הכרוב עין שמכיון שהגיע הזמן לא עכבן המקום כהרף עין (i.e., by the word מקץ Scripture teaches that as soon as the predetermined length of time for the duration of the Egyptian bondage had drawn to an end, God did not keep back the Israelites a single moment); to xiii. 22 (25b) מגיד הכרוב¹ שעדיין עמוד הענן קים היה עמוד האש צומח. Usually, however, the הכרוב is omitted, and that which is deduced from the words of the text is prefaced simply by 'מגיד ש'. E.g., xii. 31 (13b) ויקרא למשה ולאהרן מגיד שהיה פרעה מחזר ושואל (13b); xiv. 3 (37b) בכל ארץ מצרים היכן משה שרוי היכן א' שרוי יי' איש מלחמה... מגיד שנגלה עליהם הק' ב'ה בכל כלי זיין מגיד שלא היה בהם כח לקבל יורה מעשרת; xx. 19 (71b); xxxi. 17 (104b) אור² הוא הדברות שנאמר אם יוכפים אנחנו לעולם מגיד שאין שבת בטלה מישראל. From these and other illustrations it is clear that the peculiar kind of textual exposition and application which was introduced by the term מגיד was what we should now call *par excellence*, Haggada (Agada), viz., the amplification, the development of the contents of Scripture, which is nevertheless based upon some peculiarity of the Biblical text in question. The text of Scripture itself (הכרוב) indicates the new thought found

¹ The following passages contain further examples of Agadic exegesis in the *Mechilta*, introduced by 'מגיד הכתוב'—xiv. 8 (27b); xiv. 20 (30b); xv. 21 (44a); xv. 27 (46b).

² Other examples of Agada introduced by 'מגיד ש' are as follows:—xii. 17 (10a); xii. 33 (14a); xii. 34 (ib.); xii. 39 (15); xii. 42 (16b); xiv. 9 (27b); xv. 1 (36a); xv. 12 (42a); xvii. 14 (55a); xviii. 1 (57b); xix. 1 (61a); xix. 3 (62a); xx. 11 (69b); xx. 20 (72a); xxi. 18 (81b); xxi. 17 (104b); an instance of מגיד without the 'ש', xii. 22 (11b).

in it by the interpreter, the text itself teaches him, and this indicating, this teaching, is what is denominated by the term **הַגְדָּה**. In this way is derived the simplest method of arriving at the origin of this word from the very atmosphere of thoughts that produced it—a method that once recognised can never be shaken. The early expositors of the Palestinian schools, probably long before the destruction of Jerusalem, investigated exegetically (**דרש**) whatever the Scripture contained beyond the simple meaning of the words, whatever it seemed to allude to, or to deduce, or to teach; and the outcome of their investigations and of their exposition they called simply **הַגְדָּה**, the deduction, the instruction, the subject to the predicate being “the text” understood.¹

From the same source we can now proceed to show that originally this application of the term **מגיד** was not restricted to the so-called Agadic expositions, for we also meet with expositions of legal Biblical passages, the effect of which is to fix the Halacha, which are prefaced by the formula **מגיד הכתוב ש', מגיד ש'**.² The fact is that

¹ This personification of Holy Writ belongs to the linguistic usage of the early Midrash, as can be shown by a number of constant or isolated phrases. We need only call to mind the extremely frequent phrase **הכתוב מדבר**. From the *Mechilta* I will mention the following examples, **הקיש הכתב**, to xxi. 24 (84*b*); **נתקו הכתוב**, to xxii. 13 (93*b*); **יחד הכ'**, to xii.*b* (5*a*); **מתמיה עליו**, **הכ'**, to xviii. 5 (58*a*); from the *Sifre* to Num., **בא הכתוב והקיש**, § 118; **שינה הכ'**, § 84; **הוסיף בה הכתוב**, § 69. Cp. also the usage with **למד**, which will be treated of more at length afterwards; and the phrase **כ'נה הכ'**, that is used to introduce certain euphemistic passages in the Bible, called in the Massora **סופרים** **תקוני סופרים** (*Mechil.* to xv. 7 (39*a*); *Sifre* to Num. x. 35, § 84; cf. *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, II. 205). It is to be observed that wherever **הכתוב** is used, it can denote the verse under discussion, that is the single passage, or even the Scriptures as a whole. The case is the same with this word as with **מקרא**, which has the same two meanings.

² *V. Mechilta* to xii. 8 (6*b*): **מגיד הכתוב שמצות הפסח צלי מצה ומרור**, to xxi. 2 (75*a*), **מגיד הכתוב שהוא עובר שש ויוצא בשביעית**, to xxii. 13 (93*b*); **מגיד שאינו חייב ער שיוציאונו ברשותו**, *v.*, further, *Mechil.* to xii. 6 (5*b*); xii. 7 (6*a*); xii. 22 (11*b*); xii. 44 (17*a*); xii. 48 (18*a*); xiii. 10 (21*b*); xxi. 5 (76*b*); xxi. 11 (79*a*); xxi. 14 (80*b*); xxi. 18 (82*b*); xxi. 20 (83*b*).

originally there was no formal distinction in the methods of Halachic and Agadic exposition, and it is a false view that would regard Halachic and Agadic Midrash as having been from the first divided into two different spheres. One need only examine the extant remnants of the early Midrash to be assured of this truth. Here we find, verse by verse, as each paragraph in the Bible is discussed, one explanation after another, and the Halachic or Agadic character of the commentary is determined by the contents of the verses under treatment. Seeing that such is the case, we need not be surprised that the same term, *מגיד* is prefixed to both kinds of interpretation. But owing to the circumstance that in the *Mechilta* this term is found much more commonly with Agada than with Halacha, we may be permitted to conclude that it was preferably used with non-Halachic exposition, until by reason of differentiation in the terminology of the schools, the word *הגדה* was fixed in one sense, and came to denote only interpretation of a non-Halachic nature.

Besides the verb *הגיד*, another verb was used by the old expounders, which was also designed to connect the exposition with the text, and which in a yet more distinct manner marked the latter as the source of the former. This was the verb *למד*, as used in the phrase, "The Scripture comes to teach (thee, us)," which formula is very often employed in the *Mechilta* to introduce both Halachic¹ and Agadic² interpretations. From this longer formula there arose the shorter one, "in order to teach thee,"³ with which is connected the phrase 'מלמד ש',⁴ exactly corresponding to 'מגיד ש'. It is, indeed,

¹ בא הכתוב ללמדך; v. to xii. 4 (4a); xii. 11 (7a); xxi. 22 (84b); xxii 15 (94a); xxii. 25 (96b); xxiii. 18 (102a).

² V. to xii. 29 (13b); xvi. 13 (49a).

³ ללמדך, to xii. 27 (13a); xiii. 21 (25a); xiv. 27 (32b); these are purely Agadic passages.

⁴ V. to xii. 21 (11a); xii. 36 (14b); xix. 16 (64b); xix. 17 (l. l.); xix. 21 (65b).

remarkable that this last-mentioned expression, which, as we shall shortly see, became one of the most commonly used terms of the Halachic Midrash, is, in the *Mechilta*, only prefixed to Agadic passages, whilst, as we have shown, מניד occurs also with Halachic passages.¹ On the other hand, the noun תלמוד,² formed from למד, which became one of the most frequently used terms of the Midrash, especially of the Halachic Midrash, is employed in the *Mechilta* both with Halachic and Agadic explanations, thus, e.g., in the formula which asks for the underlying sense of the text, מה תלמוד לומר, literally, "what kind of teaching is it," that Scripture intends to convey, "in that it says?"³ Cp. also the extremely common formula שומע אני (שומעני) תלמוד לומר, that means, "I understand" the text in a sense that is derived from the simple construction of the words, but there is still "some teaching" in the Scripture that opposes that sense, "in that it is said."⁴ This is indeed the earliest signification of the word Talmud, which is of importance for us because in this meaning the term תלמוד bears the same relation to מלמד as הגדה to מגיד: in both expressions the word Scripture (הכתוב) is to be understood as the subject.⁵

¹ That this difference in usage between מלמד and מניד is no accidental one, can be seen from the following observation. We frequently meet in Agadic expositions with the formula, consisting of question and answer, מה תלמוד לומר.....מלמד; cp. to xvi. 10 (48a); xviii. 12 (59a); xviii. 14 (ib.). Only once do we find this formula in an Halachic passage, where מניד takes the place of מלמד, to xxi. 4 (76a); מה תלמוד לומר מניד שילדיה כמוה.

² Cp. תלמוד from תלמוד. ³ V. the examples in note 1 above.

⁴ For an example in an Halachic passage, v. to xxi. 19 (83a), שומע אני יתן, ערבים נטייל בשוק תלמוד לומר אם יקום והתהלך בחוץ מניד שחובשין (תלמוד) אותו עד שמרכא. For an Agadic example, v. to xii. 12 (7b), שומע אני על ידי מלאך או על ידי שליח תלמוד, לומר וי"י הכה כל בכור לא על ידי מלאך ולא ע"י שכיח.

⁵ The principal meaning of the word Talmud, as afterwards understood, indicating the dialectic and exegetical commentary of the Mishna, is to be referred in a direct line to this original signification. Independently

In the inquiry upon the usage of the verb *הגיד*, and of its parallel *למד*, as a part of the terminology of the earliest Biblical exegesis of Palestine, I have intentionally restricted myself to the one chief work of the Tannaite Midrash, viz., the *Mechilta* to Exodus. Now, however, we will examine the remaining Midrashim of the Tannaim upon this question. The result of the investigation will not prove uninteresting for the history of our technical term, as well as for the composition of the several works in which it occurs. The *Sifre* to Numbers stands, as is well known, next to the *Mechilta* to Exodus, and with reference to the application of *מגיד ש'*, of *לימד* and its group of phrases, there is exactly the same usage met with as in the *Mechilta*.¹ *מגיד הכתוב* and *מגיד* are chiefly prefixed to Agadic explanations, but also very frequently to those dealing with Halacha, except that the fuller formula (with *הכתוב*) is of more common occurrence in the *Sifre*.² From the word *למד* we very often meet in Halachic expositions with the phrase *בא לימד* (instead of *ולמוד*, and occasionally come across *ללמד*, the usual form in the *Mechilta*); also the common formulæ *תלמוד לומר* .. . *שומע אני*,³ and *תלמוד לומר* occur,

of this word, the phrase *תלמוד תורה* was formed, immediately from *תורה* (*למד*), to study, to teach the Torah, where the subject is "the student" or the "teacher." The phrase also occurs without the word *תורה*, e.g., as a counterpart to *מעשה*.

¹ The edition of Friedmann, with its divisions of the paragraphs and of the verses (in the second part, viz., of Deuteronomy), is the edition of the *Sifre* here quoted.

² Agadic examples:—*מגיד הכתוב* to v. 21 (§ 15); vii. 1 (§ 44); vii. 10 (§ 47); vii. 89 (§ 58); viii. 4 (61); xi. 35 (84 frequently); xii. 1 (99); xii. 10 (105); xxvii. 1 (133); xxvii. 2 (*ib.*); end of § 135; beginning of § 136; xxvii. 16 (139); xxxi. 5, 6, 8, 12 (157); *מגיד*. vi. 26 (42); ix. 7 (68); xv. 39 (115); xxvii. 13 (136); xxx. 2 (153); xxxv. 34 (161). Halachic examples: *מגיד הכתוב*, v. 17 (10); v. 23 (end of 16); xv. 11 (107); xviii. 11 (117); xviii. 19 (119); xxx. 12, 13 (154). *מגיד*, v. 15 (8); v. 17 (10); vii. 15 (50); vii. 17 (51); xv. 34 (114); xix. 9 (124); xxvi. 56 (132); xxviii. 10 (end of 144); xxv. 30 (161). V. also the expression *מגיד דבר*, v. 15 (8).

³ At v. 10 (end of 6) instead of *שומע אני*, we find the corresponding term used in the "Akiban" Midrash, *יכול*: cf. also to xi. 21 (94).

being applied to countless instances. The participle מלמד is here also only prefaced to Agada.¹

Just as the *Mechilta* and the *Sifre* to Numbers are characteristic of the school of R. Ishmael, so is the *Sifra* (Torath Kohanim), which is the Tannaite Midrash to Leviticus, of the school of R. Akiba. One of the peculiarities of the terminology of this Midrashic work² is the fact that the expression מניד ש' is never used. And, as if to mark this singularity yet more distinctly, we find in the two passages, both derived from the Midrash of the school of Ishmael, which are subjoined to the sections אחרי מות קדושים and מור, the formula מניד used in one place with Halacha and in the other with Agada.³ Once in the *Sifra* להניד indeed occurs, but this passage also seems to have come from the Midrash of R. Ishmael, as it is also to be found in the *Sifre* to Deuteronomy.⁴ The expression מלמד ש' has completely displaced מניד ש' in the *Sifra*, and is used regularly without its subject הכתוב.⁵ It occurs chiefly with Halacha, but not infrequently also with Agada.

The Tannaite Midrash to Deuteronomy, which, together

¹ To v. 19 (12); xi. 4 (86); xi. 8 (89); xi. 10 (90); xi. 16 (92); xi. 30 (98); xi. 31 (97); xi. 33 (98); xii. 2 (100); xxv. 12 (131). In § 114 it is Halachically inferred from xv. 36, מלמד שכל חייבי מיתות נהרגים חוץ לבית דין; originally, however, מניד was the reading, since we find to xv. 34, מניד מלמד שלא נתחלקה, Cp. also § 132 to xxvi. 54, שכל חייבי מיתות נחבשים מניד שלא נתחלק א"י, with the following to xxvi. 56, מניד שלא נתחלק א"י.

² Cp. Hoffmann, *Zur Einleitung in die halachischen Midraschim*, p. 31.

³ *Sifra* (edited by Weiss), 93a, to xx. 18:—העוה מניד הכתוב שעשה—מניד הכתוב שמעשהו של ש'.....; 86a, to xviii. 3, מצרים מקולקלין מכל צממין.

⁴ *Sifra*, 84a to xvii. 14:—להניד מה גרם.....; cp. also *Sifre* to Deut. xiv. 27 (§ 108), להניד מה גרם, It is preferable to believe that this expression originated with the school of R. Ishmael, and found its way into the *Sifra*, than to ascribe it to the school of Akiba, which latter can claim the greater part of the middle portion of the *Sifre* to Deuteronomy.

⁵ J. Lewy in his treatise *A Word upon the Mechilta of R. Simon* (p. 83) remarks that in the *Mechilta* of R. Simon b. Jochai (of the school of R. Akiba) the expression הכתוב ללמד does not occur.

with that to Numbers constitutes the work called *Sifré*, originates chiefly from the school of Akiba, though it contains both in its Agadic and Halachic passages much that can be traced to the school of Ishmael.¹ The mixed character of this Midrash is further made manifest by the use of both the terms מלמד and מגיד. We find that neither is מגיד quite omitted, as in the *Sifra*, nor is מלמד employed only for Agadic expositions, as in the *Mechilta* of R. Ishmael. Most frequently we meet with מלמד ש' for Agadic explanations; but in the central portion (§§ 105-301) this expression preponderates in Halachic passages: it is just this central portion that bears the impress of the school of Akiba. In several paragraphs of the first and third parts that are mainly Agadic, and can be traced to the school of R. Ishmael,² מגיד הכתוב ש' and מגיד ש' occur in connection with Agadic expositions. The instances of the Halachic use of מגיד are to be found scattered about chiefly in the middle part.³

The knowledge of numerous fragments from a *Mechilta* to Deuteronomy, which Dr. Hoffmann has collected and elucidated from the "Midrash Haggadol,"⁴ we owe to that scholar, whose work upon the relation between the Midrashic writings of the school of Ishmael and that of Akiba is of exceptional merit. The few examples of the use of מלמד and מגיד that are to be found in the extracts given by Hoffmann, confirm the result of his investigation that this *Mechilta* is chiefly the work of the school of R. Ishmael, but also contains elements of the Akiban school.

¹ V. Hoffmann, p. 66 sq.

² V. to i. 24 (beginning of § 22); i. 20 (§ 23); xi. 12 (40); xi. 13 (beginning of 41); xi. 18 (beginning of 45); xi. 22 (beginning of 48); xii. 2 (beginning of 60); xii. 23 (beginning of 76). In § 353 to xxxiii. 13 sq., we find in the midst of a number of explanations, introduced by מלמד, one commencing with מגיד. In the central portion, to xv. 4 (114); xv. 8 (118).

³ To xv. 19 (beginning of 124); xvii. 12 (155); xxi. 5 (208); v. also to xii. 15 (71); xii. 20 (75).

⁴ *Jubelschrift* on the seventieth birthday of Dr. Israel Hildesheimer, pp. 83-98 in the German, and pp. 1-32 in the Hebrew section.

We, above all, meet with illustrations of the employment of מניד both with Agada and Halacha,¹ and also of the fact that מלמד is prefixed to both kinds of passages.²

The fact that the school of R. Ishmael used the expression מניד as a fixed technical term of Scriptural exposition, proves that this term had for a long time previously formed an integral part of the dialect of the Palestinian exegetes, for it is the Midrash of the school of R. Ishmael that preserved the tradition of the older exegesis as regards its contents, and certainly also as regards its terminology. The noun הגדה, connected with the term מניד, was in existence long before the Halachic and Agadic Midrash had reached its highest stage of development in the schools of Ishmael and Akiba; and whilst the school of Akiba altogether gave up the use of the verb הגיד, as a technical term in Biblical exposition, in favour of its parallel למיד, the derivation (הגדה) of the first verb had already become well known, and had obtained the special signification which we find connected with it in the oldest examples furnished by Rabbinical literature. This signification is none other than that which is derived from the meaning of the verb הגיד as an exegetical term. The evidence for this statement can also be made to serve as a test of the novel explanation that has been put forth in the present investigation in such complete opposition to previous interpreters of the meaning of the word Haggada. The original sense of the word is most clearly to be recognised in the instances where it is used in the plural. Eleazar b. Arach in his consolatory speech addressed to R. Johanan b. Zaccai upon the death of his son, praises the latter as one who had read the Holy

¹ Agadic, to xiv. 23; Halachic, to xvi. 8, xvi. 11, xx. 19, xxiv. 20. It is noteworthy that in the latter instance the *Sifre* (§ 284) introduces this Halacha by מלמד שיש לו פאה; here we read מניד שהוית חייב (בפאה). The phrase מניד דבר מניד (v. *supra*, p. 421, end of note 2), as Hoffmann remarks (p. 87), "occurs very frequently."

² Agadic, l. 1; xx. 19; xxvi. 5 (all these quotations occur also in the *Sifre*). Halachic, to xxi. 17.

Scriptures, and had studied the Halachoth and Haggadoth.¹ These plural forms denote the sum of the Halachic and non-Halachic expositions attached to the separate verses of the Bible, because originally הגדה naturally signified a single instance of the latter kind of exposition, whilst הלכה described a single instance of a law deduced from the text. Another disciple of R. Johanan b. Zaccai, Joshua b. Chananya, speaks of the "highly esteemed Haggadoth which are eagerly listened to by everyone."² R. Tarphon reports of R. Ishmael b. Elisha that he was very deeply versed in the Haggadoth.³ The exegetical nature of that branch of learning known as הלכות והגדות, becomes clear when we observe that both words are used along with the expression מדרש.⁴ But besides the plural הגדות (אגדות), the singular form הגדה (אגדה), also very early obtained the meaning by which it denoted the general body of non-Halachic interpretation of the Scripture, so that it came no longer to signify the individual explanation of a particular verse, but exposition in general. Wherever

¹ *Aboth di R. Nathan*, end of b. 14 (edited by Schechter, 30a):—קרא תורה ומקרא נביאים וכתובים משנה הלכות ואגדות. It is impossible that should have been the original reading, because the verb קרא can only be applied to the Bible, and מקרא, here placed in the midst of the three divisions of the Bible, is superfluous and unmeaning. It seems to me that קרא should be emended to ושנה, and the words נביאים וכתובים be regarded as an explanatory gloss to מקרא (*v. Revue d. E. T.*, xv., 113). The sentence would then read קרא תורה ומקרא ושנה הלכות ואגדות. Among the branches of knowledge for which R. Johanan b. Zaccai was himself celebrated, is והגדות הלכות; *v. A. di R. N.*, beginning of c. 14; *Succa*, 28b, *B. Bathra*, 134a.

² *Mechilta* to xv. 26 (46a), אגדות המשובחות הנשמעות באזני כל אדם.

³ *Moed Katon*, 28b, בקי באגדות; Joshua b., Levy says in the Midrash פועלות יי' אלו הגדות, 5, to Psalm xxviii.

⁴ The two legates of the Roman government learn with R. Gamliel also מדרש הלכות ואגדות, *Sifre* to Deut. xxxiii. 3 (344); in *Jer. Baba Kamma*, 4b, occur the words הלכות והגדות by themselves. According to R. Judah b. Ilai, a person who wishes to officiate upon the occasion of a service on a fast-day, must also be skilled in מדרש הל' והג' (*Taanith*, 16a). In telling of the learning of R. Johanan b. Zaccai. *Mass. Soferim*, 16, 8, includes also מדרש הלכות ואגדות.

we meet with the word in this abstract sense in the singular number, the meaning is quite evident, and there is absolutely no reason for ascribing to it such significations as "tales, that which is said, narration, legend, discourse." In examining the passage where the people of Alexandria solicited an answer from the aged R. Joshua b. Chananya upon שלשה דברי הגדה and שלשה דברי חכמה,¹ we are not in any doubt about the meaning of the two abstract terms חכמה and הגדה, because tradition itself tells us the questions denoted by these terms. חכמה here denotes Halachic legal lore, for which signification הלכה is generally used; הגדה indicates non-Halachic interpretation of the Scriptures, because the three questions refer to Biblical passages which contradict each other, and R. Joshua b. Chananya is asked to reconcile them by means of his intimacy with Agadic exposition. R. Levi b. Sisi, a disciple of R. Judah I., was recommended as a judge and teacher to a certain congregation. In order to test his capability for the office, the members of the community addressed to him, though he had such a high recommendation, certain Halachic questions. Seeing that he was unable to answer them, they said, "Let us ask him some Haggada!" Then they asked him how the seeming contradiction between the words רשום and אמת (in Daniel x. 21) was to be solved.² A third characteristic illustration from the third century is the following:—R. Jonathan b. Eleazer had set up the thesis, that in the Holy Writ God permitted three persons to make a request, by means of the expression וְשָׂאֵל, viz., King Solomon (1 Kings iii. 5), King Ahaz

¹ *Nidda*, 66b; v. *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 186.

² *Jer. Jebamoth*, end of c. 12 (13a); *Genesis Rabba*, beginning of c. 81. Instead of וְשָׂאֵל לִיָּהּ רִאשׁוֹן דְּרֵאשִׁיָּהּ (as it ought to read in the *Jerushalmi*, from וְשָׂאֵל, the plural to וְשָׂאֵל, it has become incorrectly לִיָּהּ רִאשׁוֹן), Gen. v. reads וְשָׂאֵל הוּא נִשְׂאֵלָה קְרָאִי. In this anecdote הגדה is opposed to אֵלֶּפֶס (knowledge of traditional Halacha); so also in the anecdote about Rab and Chiya, that belongs to this period, *Gen. R.*, c. 56.

(Isaiah vii. 11), and King Messiah (Ps. ii. 8.) Thereupon, one of the Rabbi's pupils, Samuel b. Nachman (both were Agadists of the first rank), observed that he knew of two other persons to whom the same favour was extended by God, though the text does not distinctly say so; but מן החנדה, i.e., exegetically, it can be proved that such was the case. These persons are, Abraham, in which instance the question מן הרקן לי presupposes the anterior invitation קרא (Gen. xv. 2), and Jacob, where from Gen. xxviii. 22, the same can be derived from the words וכל אשר הרקן לי.¹ This last example shows very distinctly what idea was connected with חנדה; here, too, the word denotes the same as was above deduced from the corresponding verb (חניד, מניד), viz., the exegetical elaboration of the contents of a verse, the evolution of new ideas based upon the interpretation of the Biblical text. It would take me too far were I to discuss the other illustrations that traditional literature furnishes for its use. The conclusions at which we have arrived by means of the preceding considerations form, according to my opinion, an unassailable foundation for the determination of the origin and primary significance of the word Haggada. To this fundamental meaning, the different shades of its use can be referred without any strained or finely-drawn arguments, but in a purely natural manner.

There is only one more point to be touched upon in this question, viz., that the expression חנדה was at a very early date brought into connection with the Aramaic verb גנר (corresponding to the Hebrew ממשך), without any reference to its real etymology. It was said that the חנדה was so called because it "attracts" (draws) the heart of men. This loose etymology, used with the idea of exalting the Agada,² was employed by Eleazar of Modiim (the

¹ Gen. R., c. 44, שחר טוב, to Ps. ii. 8. Cf. also the question of R. Joshua b. Chananya to the disciple who had heard a lecture given by R. Eleazar b. Azariah, בכה היתה הנדה היום (Chagiga Babyl., 3a), Jerus. reads מזה היתה פרישתו.

² V. supra, p. 425, note 2, for a similar description of the effect of the Agada upon its hearers, though differently expressed.

Agadist καὶ ἐξοχῇ at the beginning of the second century) in order to explain the word גִּד (Exod. xvi. 31) which is applied in the description of the Manna, and which resembles הגִּדָּה in sound,¹ and also by Judah I., in order to import some special meaning into the word ויגִיד (Exod. xix. 9).² Of course this etymology of the word Haggada does not imply that at such an early time the relation of the word with the verb הגִּיד was already forgotten. Still, the very possibility of such a playful etymology tends to show that the expression even then had long been known in an independent sense, distinct from the word-family to which it belongs. The origin of the word, and its actual meaning, were well-known for a long time afterwards, as proved by the examples I have adduced; but, nevertheless, no hesitation was felt in giving it a supposed etymological connection with an Aramaic root, which happened to be suitable for the purpose of giving expression in the usual pregnant manner to the irresistible effect of the Agada upon the minds of the people. Probably this exalting etymology originated from that circle of the early Agadists, who glorified the religious import of Agadic expositions, and its influence upon religious and moral perception and action, in the remarkable words, "Do you wish to recognise Him at whose word the world came into being? Then learn Haggada; for from it you will be enabled to recognise the Holy One, blessed be He, and cleave unto His ways!"³

In conclusion, a few words are required in treating of the two ways in which the word here discussed is written.

¹ *Mechilta* to xvi. 31 (51a), כורע גר דומה להגדה שהוא מושך לבו של אדם. Cp. *Yoma*, 75a, v. *Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 196.

² *Sabbath*, 87a, כמאנה אדם שמושיב לבו של אדם; ויגיד משה דברים שמושיב לבו של אדם. Also *Chagiga*, 14a, כמאנה אדם שמושיב לבו של אדם. כמים באנה.

³ *Sifre* to Deut. xi. 22 (§ 49); דורשי רשומות אומרים רצונך שתכיר מי ישאמר והיה העולם למוד הגדה שמתוך כך אתה מכיר את הק"ב ומדבק ברכיו; v. *Agada der Tannaiten*, I. 35. The remark of R. Joshua b. Levi (quoted above, page 425, note 3) has a similar meaning.

As is known, whilst the Babylonian Talmud most frequently spells it *הגדה*, the Palestinian works write it *אגדה*. Both Levy and Kohut assume that the form with an א is in no way a phonetic and orthographic modification of the word with the ה, which is the older of the two, but is a word entirely distinct both grammatically and radically. Both punctuate as follows: *אגדה*, and Levy supposes a simple root גר (with which he connects the Hebrew נגר), and from which comes the secondary root אגר, while Kohut takes the Aramaic word נגר as the root, though without any grammatical basis for his assertion. The real solution of the difficulty, however, is that the form *אגדה* is an example of that common softening of *הפעלה* into *אפעלה* so frequently made in Palestine. Notwithstanding this, the word in this form is not to be looked upon as an Aramaic noun derived from the Aphel, because no such Aphel form as *אגיר=הגיר* exists in Aramaic. It is merely an Aramaised form of the original Hebrew word, a parallel to which can be found in Biblical Hebrew in *אזקרה*, a term belonging to the sacrificial ritual.¹ The word ought, moreover, to be pointed *אגדה*, and its correct transcription would be *Aggada*. But the spelling *Agada* has become so common in the majority of scientific works of this century that treat of the word and its significance, that it would not be right to insist that the strange form with the double "g" should supersede the ordinary accepted spelling.² Even Zunz transcribed *הגדה* with one "g," and in his *Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge* and other later works he invariably writes the word *Hagada*.

W. BACHER.

¹ Similar *אפעלה* forms of purely Hebrew words are *אבטחה*, *Mechilta* to xviii. 21 (60a, line 1), *אברלה*, *אונאה*, *ארלקה*, *Jer. Shebiith*, beginning of c. 7.

² Cp. JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, III., 790.